

Women of Strength

AFG's 2011 Role Models show uncommon courage

"I'm a living example of a person whose dream came true, and it wasn't a typical dream," smiles Monica Morgan, AFG's 2011 Professional Role Model. Morgan is one of three outstanding women who will be honored at this year's Role Model Dinner. This year's dinner theme is "Uncommon Courage," and each woman has exemplified just that—the courage to break through glass ceilings, the courage to think outside the box, and the courage to show endless compassion.

Role Model Dinner

March 31, 2011

Westin Book Cadillac, Detroit
5:30 pm until 9:00 pm
Tickets are \$150 each

To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.AlternativesForGirls.org or contact Chavon Clark at (313)361-4000 ext. 223

This year's Role Models include Morgan, international photojournalist, of Monica Morgan Photography; Valerie Newman, attorney, of the State Appellate Defender Office; and Ann Nicholson, community volunteer.



Monica Morgan

Living life through the lens

Morgan, who was the official photographer of Rosa Parks and has photographed over 120 heads of state, has proven the power of determination. "I grew up in southwest Detroit. I didn't grow up with a silver spoon. I took 3 buses and I went to Cass Tech," she explains. Morgan continues, "There were times when I had negative counselors or teachers that told me what I could or couldn't do. But I didn't listen to that. I believed that whatever I set out to do could become a reality." It was only after graduating from college that she considered becoming a photographer. She quickly learned how to tap into networks around Detroit.

continued on page 2

Why I Work at AFG

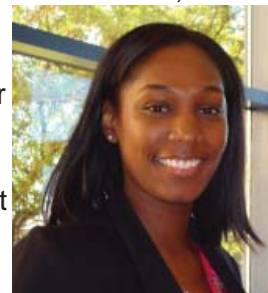
By Diona Roberson, AFG Young Women Changing Communities Advisor

Growing up I can remember wanting to be an actress, dazzling people with my wit and charm. My performance of a dramatic prose would bring tears to the eyes and warmth to the hearts of those I entertained. I wanted to inspire, impress and recite acceptance speeches. I wanted to touch people's lives. That dream has transformed itself into many different dreams over the years but some of its traits remain.

Sometimes I revisit that dream but not in a resentful sense. I look back at my childhood ambitions as a reminder to myself that all girls deserve to dream. They are entitled to fantasize about a future so fantastic that they play dress up and act it out. They need to know what it feels like to be unfamiliar with

failure and enveloped in promise.

Growing up I felt like the sky wasn't the limit, that I could reach Mars or even Pluto. Anything that I dreamed, wished or prayed for could come true. I was encouraged to work hard, do my best and believe in myself. Not only did my family encourage me but I received encouragement from AFG staff and my group leader as an AFG Prevention participant. But I know that there are far too many girls who don't feel this way and who don't have additional support persons in their lives.



continued on page 3

continued from page 1

"I am a native Detroiter. It's a city of opportunity," she smiles. Luther Keith, whom she had met through her college involvement with the Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists and AFG board member, bought her first article for the Detroit News.

Now, she pays it forward by mentoring other photographers and young women who are interested in photography. "Making a difference in a person's life is what's most important and most valuable to me," Morgan states.

Pursuing social justice

Valerie Newman, who is being honored as this year's Community Role Model, has a similarly generous spirit. She remembers, "Growing up, my father was really actively involved in the community. Going out with my dad and being very community-focused started me out on the right foot."

After growing up in Oak Park and living briefly on the east coast, she returned to Detroit for law school and has remained in the area ever since. "I wanted to go to law school where I would have the opportunity to be involved in grassroots type of work," Newman recalls.



Valerie Newman

Since returning to the area, she has worked ceaselessly for women's rights and social justice through organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House, the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation, and the American Constitution Society. "I've been really proud of the reputation that I've been able to build for myself as a lawyer and as a person who is willing to help people out," she states.

This April, she will build upon that reputation by arguing a case in front of the US Supreme Court.

Championing education

Ann Nicholson, AFG's 2011 Champion Role Model honoree, is known throughout the community for her dedication to education. "I'm a big believer in formal education. It gives us so many more options in life. AFG is not a formal school, but the informal

education the girls acquire here – how to cooperate to solve problems, to share, to organize, see both sides of a story – these are empowering skills which are theirs forever," she explains.



Ann Nicholson

Nicholson moved here in 1972 after growing up in a small town north of Seattle in Washington State. While she admits that she misses the "landscape of sea, islands and mountains," "Detroit is home. People here are very friendly, they have good values, and they are interested in the greater good."

Since her move to Detroit, she has volunteered in countless capacities, from tutoring at Cornerstone Schools to serving on the Oakland University Board of Trustees for 16 years. "It's fun, it's purposeful, and if all goes well, someone's world might actually be a little better for it," she says of her volunteerism.

Voice of the spirit

Each of these women has also championed AFG. Morgan currently teaches photography to one of the young women in our after-school program. Newman created the Culinary Challenge for the Women Lawyers Foundation, an event that raises funds for several nonprofits that support girls each year, including AFG. Nicholson has supported AFG in numerous ways over the past decade, from chairing the capital campaign that allowed AFG to build its current facility to sitting on the committee that distributes scholarships donated by the AAUW to young women at AFG.

Their accomplishments illustrate the fact that there is no set path towards being an outstanding role model to young women. "I think it's critical that women have strong roles models of people who are successful, which is defined by a variety of factors—a woman who is strong and confident and able to accomplish things in whatever role they're in, from a stay-at-home mom to a president of a corporation," states Newman.

And these women are certainly accomplishing things while providing resounding examples to the girls and young women of AFG of the power of determination, compassion, and spirit.

Why I Volunteer at AFG



By Martha Goode, AFG Prevention Volunteer

Many people ask me if I am related to AFG's CEO, Amy Good. I always tell them, "No, but Amy wishes she had an "e" on her name." "Good" is tough to live up to anywhere." I am Martha Goode, and during the school year, I am living the "Goode life" as a volunteer in the Prevention department working with Young Women Changing Communities.

Being old is such a gift. Retirement makes it possible for me to share in the magnificent efforts Alternatives For Girls makes day after day. As a lifelong Detroitier living two miles from AFG, I am thrilled to embrace the mission of this remarkable organization.

My initial approach to AFG during the summer of 2008 involved a national program called Young Neighbors in Action (YNIA). It is a service

learning program for high school age young people that brings together thousands of participants from all over the U.S. every summer. YNIA completed 640 hours of service at AFG. AFG is one of the best, as I see it. In my capacity as the administrator of a local high school youth ministry program of 1,100, I've been involved with sending hundreds of young neighbors to many worksites in Chicago, Washington, DC and Detroit. Because I retired from my day job after 47 years of working with high schoolers, I wanted to volunteer as the facilitator for AFG to YNIA.

Simply, my intention was to work side by side doing any service AFG needed from young neighbors teams. AFG welcomed the idea, and the rest is history.

How exciting to be with these high school and early college age women as they reach out to make a better world through developing workshops and programming for elementary, middle school, and local community organizations. Striving to be an agent of change is also a very powerful experience of personal transformation. Watching that process with these young women, and observing the efforts of their coordinator has been glorious.

To learn more about volunteering at AFG, visit www.AlternativesForGirls.org

continued from page 1

At Alternatives For Girls I work with girls ages 14-21 to promote leadership. Young Women Changing Communities' mission is to create young women leaders in southwest Detroit. Participants receive leadership training and job readiness skills to assist them in the future. They are given the opportunity to create and facilitate life skills workshops for elementary aged youth, they identify issues in their community and work to find their solutions and they find youth leadership positions at different youth servicing agencies throughout southwest Detroit. These are young women who want to support and help change their community and who are committed to public and community service. Young women who refuse to believe that they can't transform their lives.

Working at AFG is my opportunity to give and serve. I work at AFG because I'm a leader in my community and I'm committed to showing young

women of all ages what possibilities look like. I work to ensure that young women in my community know that they can make positive choices and aspire for lives that may seem unimaginable. I work at AFG because we fill the void left by broken homes, abuse, blighted communities and poverty. I work at AFG because as a past participant I feel entitled to try and give back just as much as I've received. I am here to do more than just work, I am here to serve.

**Alternatives is a publication of
Alternatives For Girls**

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Briefing Room

Holiday Tea

On December 9th, nearly 100 supporters of Alternatives For Girls attended a Holiday High Tea at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham. Through ticket sales, a silent auction, and sponsorships, the event raised over \$8,500 for AFG. The event was sponsored by Shirley Maddalena and a group of financial advisors at Morgan Stanley/Smith Barney. This year marked the 22nd year that Shirley Maddalena has hosted the Holiday High Tea.

Avalon Fundraiser

This Valentine's Day, Avalon International Breads shared "big love" with Alternatives For Girls by donating a portion of the proceeds from each Valentine's Day gift sold to AFG. In addition, they are sharing a portion of all sales on Monday, February 14th. Avalon has supported AFG in countless creative ways since it was founded, and we are so grateful to have such a wonderful friend!

Welcome to New Staff

This fall, AFG welcomed two new staff members: Brad Whitaker, our new Chief Operating Officer, and Angela Armstrong, our new Director of Finance. Mr. Whitaker will oversee operations of programs, facility, HR, and IT systems, ensuring quality of services. Ms. Armstrong will oversee all accounting operations of the agency. Prior to joining Alternatives for Girls, Mr. Whitaker served as the Rector of Christ Church, a 1200 member congregation in Grosse Pointe. Angela Armstrong comes to AFG from the National Association of Social Workers in Washington, DC. Prior to that she served as the Controller for American Association of University Women, also in Washington, DC.

12 Months of Flowers

You can help a girl "bloom" by purchasing 12 Months of Flowers through English Gardens! For more information and to download an order form, visit www.AlternativesForGirls.com/Donate

Want even more news? Sign-up for the Alternatives For Girls monthly e-newsletter. If interested, please email Chavon Clark at cclark@alternativesforgirls.org.